

Chapter 13

Duties of the Director

According to the manual IN the Public Trust, page D-2,
the director has the responsibility to:

1. implement board policies
2. represent the library in negotiations, public relations and other public events
3. recommend staff for hiring
4. direct, supervise, educate, evaluate and discipline all staff
5. prepare the annual budget for approval by the board
6. manage the finances of the library
7. oversee the assets of the library
8. plan the annual operations of the library to fit into the long-range plan of the board
9. assist the board in the governance of the library by informing the board of the status of the library and recommending policy direction for the board
10. report to the board the results of board actions
11. remain current and knowledgeable about the library and appropriate methods of operation
12. prepare an annual report of the progress of the library and submit that report to the board and to the Indiana State Library.

The library director is the person ultimately responsible for the library. Even though the board is governing the library, the director is managing it and all of its resources. This includes the facilities, finances, personnel, and inventory.

Depending on the size of the library, you will either be working with a team of professionals which you will oversee in their management of select resources, or you will be the one and only manager juggling the management of everything – or something in between.

The first duty of the new director is to find out which scenario fits your library, and roll with it. Either you will be fixing a stopped-up toilet and scraping ice off of the sidewalks in between budget and programming meetings, or you will be making sure that these tasks get done while you deal with issues only the large libraries encounter, such as investments and foundations.

One thing you need to realize, however, is that you are not alone. That is what this guide is all about – to provide you with the resources and contact information you will

need to manage your library. The State Library is here to aid you in your quest to provide Indiana residents with top-notch library service.

Another resource is your peers. Many directors in Indiana have mentored beginning library directors in the past, and many continue to do so. Get on the listserv, ask questions, check out statistics on the ISL website and find out what libraries are the same size and call those directors. Some may be dealing with major issues of their own and not be able to help, but don't be deterred. Librarians in Indiana are a very giving bunch, so don't reinvent the wheel. You will be asked to provide payback someday!

Resources included in this chapter also available online:

Ten Graces For New Librarians

<http://www.well.com/user/ladyhawk/gadhome.html>

Tips From the Trenches

<http://www.in.gov/library/2797.htm>

The following is adapted from the Small Library Project Pamphlet #3, “**The Trustee of a Small Public Library**”, published by ALA, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL. 60611.

Duties of the Library Board

1. Employ a competent and qualified librarian
2. Determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation and program of the library.
3. Determine the purposes of the library and secure adequate funds to carry on the library’s program.
4. Know the program and needs of the library in relation to the community; keep abreast of standards and library trends; plan and carry out the library program.
5. Establish, support, and participate in a planned public relations program.
6. Assist in the preparation of the annual budget.
7. Know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation.
8. Establish a library policy dealing with book and materials selection.
9. Attend all board meetings and see that accurate records are kept on file at the library.
10. Attend regional, state, and national trustee meetings and workshops, and affiliate with the appropriate professional organizations.
11. Be aware of the services of the Indiana State Library, Library Development Office.
12. Report regularly to the governing officials and the general public.

Duties of the Director

1. Act as technical advisor to the board; recommend needed policies for board action; recommend employment of all personnel and supervise their work.
2. Carry out the policies of the library as adopted by the board.
3. Suggest and carry out plans for extending the library’s services.
4. Prepare regular reports embodying the library’s current progress and future needs; cooperate with the board to plan and carry out the library program.
5. Maintain an active program of public relations.
6. Prepare an annual budget for the library in consultation with the board and give a current report of expenditures against the budget at each meeting.
7. Know local and state laws, actively support library legislation in the state and nation.
8. Select and order all books and other library materials.
9. Attend all board meetings other than those in which his own salary or tenure are under discussion.
10. Affiliate with state and national professional organizations and attend professional meetings and workshops.
11. Make use of the services and consultants of the Indiana State Library, Library Development Office.
12. Report regularly to the library board, to the officials of local government, and to the general public.

—Commencement address
School of Information Science and Policy, SUNY/Albany
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Ten Graces for New Librarians

Good evening. It is an honor and a pleasure to be with you. The last time I addressed a graduating class, it was as valedictorian at my own high school — thirty-one years ago. Sister Bernadette, who was my speech coach and who rid me of my Bronx accent, gave me one sentence of advice: be charming, she said, and be brief.

I will endeavor to follow her advice now, as I did then. But in seeking wisdom as to what to tell you, I sought some from my own colleagues and yours. I put a call out on the net. I sent a query via e-mail to my various library listservs, and asked my fellow librarians online. I asked them what they thought I should tell you, newly minted, freshly picked librarians, as you take your degrees and go forth.

I got more than eighty responses, from twenty-one states and three foreign countries. They were, universally, heartfelt and upbeat and wonderful, in the original sense of full of wonder. Even though I am clearly not David Letterman (although Letterman and I are exactly the same age), here is a list of ten, well, let us call them admonitions or blessings, graces, if you will, for new librarians.

The first should be pretty obvious — join a listserv! Actually, it is much broader than that — link yourselves to your colleagues in the field. There are many library-related listservs, and through them, you can be in touch with people who do the same work as you across the country and the world. Particularly for new librarians, and those who find themselves in smaller libraries, that connection will keep you sane. Join your professional associations — your state association surely, but also the American Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, the Art Libraries Society of North America — whatever your particular library specialty is, find your colleagues and talk to them. As Sue Searing of the University of Wisconsin says, "library work culture is basically collaborative.... Seize the opportunities for support." There are many such opportunities, and as you exploit them, hold fast, in your dealings with your colleagues, to the gentle rules of courtesy. Say "please" and "thank you" and "well done!" and "that was great!"

Number Two: You have your degree, but you make your education every day. One of the great joys of being a librarian is that it is the last refuge of the renaissance person — everything you have ever read or learned or picked up is likely to come in handy. Realize that your degree is only the beginning. The world of librarianship is unimaginably different now from what it was in 1972 when I got my MLS from the late, lamented Columbia University; in fact, it is unimaginably different from what it was five years ago when I got my first e-mail address; or two years ago when I first heard the words, "world wide web." Keep learning stuff; as a librarian, you are in a unique position to do so.

Number three: "Make your own luck" was the way Taina Makinen of Toronto put it. Take advantage of what comes your way, and put yourself in the way of opportunity. A positive attitude, and a realistic sense of your own selfhood, are tools at least as precious as the skills you

have learned in school. Your first job won't be your last, but it is your first chance. Learn your own organization thoroughly — most libraries aren't very good at staff development. And learn, as soon as you can, how to speak up: at meetings; with trustees; before community boards. Find the courage to raise your voice and be heard.

Number four: Find and keep and nurture your sense of humor. People in service professions, especially in public service, need a finely-honed sense of the absurdities of life, because you will deal with them every day, and many of them will not have an aroma of sweetness about them.

Number five: With Richard Palladino of Iona College, I say, "be the librarian you would have wanted to encounter as a patron: approachable, attentive, facilitative, generous." And with Lisa Richland of the Library in Greenport, New York, I say that "public doesn't mean clean or sane or similar to ourselves, and that the public responds to a sincere interest and an open smiling face." We are a service profession, and we need a tender openness toward those we serve: students, faculty, children, adult learners, executives.

Number six: If you are a mom or a dad, if you're in love, I don't even have to tell you this. But with Kathy Deiss of the Association of Research Libraries, let me remind you, "keep your life and work in balance." Make sure that you have interests, hobbies, distractions, and passions outside of the workplace. They will enrich your life, and make the unbearable possible.

Number seven: Change is what happens. Change is the only surety. We can create and embrace change, or we can fear and fight it, but change will come in either case. It is far less stressful to frame change as an adventure. A corollary to this was expressed by two folks in very different fields of librarianship: John Haskell Jr of the College of William and Mary and Judy Jerome from a school library system in New York State: Judy said, "work within the system, but be subversive." John was more direct: "rules are meant to be bent and even broken; they can also be changed or discarded."

Number eight: Develop a strong sense of your own self-worth, and the worth of the profession. Honor and respect the women and men you work with. Take the values you learned in library school and apply them in the real world. As Sarah Pritchard of Smith College says, Don't permit a false dichotomy to be made of a "social issue" versus a "library issue" — examine how the issue affects equity and access and intellectual participation for our users and for ourselves as professionals. In the words of the ancient Jewish philosopher Hillel, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?"

Number nine: Make your particular vision part of the cultural memory of librarianship — write for publication. From book reviews to a column in the local newspaper, from Letters to the Editor in [American Libraries](#) to feature articles in *Library Journal* or your own library's web site, write about what you have learned, what you want to share, how you think about what you do. It is the deepest legacy you can leave for those who stand beside you, and who will follow you.

Tenth, and last: I believe that librarianship is the connecting of people to ideas. Now, very late in the twentieth century, it doesn't matter, often, where the people are, as they call up and dial in and fax over. It doesn't matter where the ideas are, either, in a book or on a video or over the net. And it's not just good ideas, not just worthy ideas, but bad ideas and lousy ideas and dangerous ideas and silly ideas. We particularly need to save the dangerous and silly ideas, because if we don't, who will?

Go and celebrate now, with your families and your loved ones. We share a great profession. And we get to buy books with other people's money. Rejoice in having the good fortune to be a librarian. If you let it, it will bring you joy.

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